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On track for Marathon Des Sables

KUALA LUMPUR — Red Ribbon youth icon Jeff Lau will be taking on the brutal Sahara Desert for his second Marathon des Sables challenge in less than a week's time in aid of the Malaysian AIDS Foundation (MAF).

He will be running across 251km of arid desert terrain in Southern Morocco with 1,000 other top endurance runners from around the world.

His target this time is not only to complete the race and beat his previous record, but also highlight the HIV crisis affecting women, youths and children in Malaysia.

Along the way, he hopes to raise funds to support high-impact HIV intervention programmes specially designed for them.

"I have been training for the

marathon since December, but more intensively in the past couple of months," Lau said.

"I would run twice a week for a distance of 35km each time, all the while carrying an 8kg backpack. As Marathon des Sables is a self-sufficiency multi-stage race, in addition to battling the elements, all runners are required to carry with them food and everything else they need to survive on their back. It is not called the 'toughest footrace on earth' for nothing."

As the only Malaysian participant in the race this year, Lau, 26, is looking forward to making new friends and talking to them about his mission and the plight of underprivileged people living with HIV in Malaysia.

MAF chairman Prof Dr Adeeba

Kamarulzaman said: "This year's edition is of greater significance to us compared to previous years as it coincides with the start of the Ending AIDS by 2030 global campaign."

Since its launch in January, the MAF Marathon des Sables 2016 Challenge has raised RM70,000, nearing half of the fundraising goal of RM160,000.

The online crowdfunding drive is ongoing until April 30. To make your contribution, log on to www.simplygiving.com/event/mds2016.

For further enquiries, call 03-4047 4257.

Lau, the only Malaysian participant in the race this year, is looking forward to raising awareness of HIV.

